

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14-36 are pending in the present application. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 1, 5, 11, and 15 are amended. Claims 1 and 11 are amended to incorporate features of claims 3 and 13 and currently recite “at least one magnetic effect inducing device, wherein the at least one magnetic effect inducing device induces a magnetic field to the spin valve sensor to thereby reduce a sensitivity of a free layer of the spin valve sensor to applied magnetic fields and wherein the at least one magnetic effect inducing device is a pair of permanent magnet stiffening elements.” Claims 5 and 15 are amended in view of the amendments to claims 1 and 11. Support for these amendments may be found at least on page 16, line 6 to page 20, line 6 in the specification. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Distinctions of the Claims over the Cited Art

The Decision on Appeal maintains the rejections of claims 1-6, 10-16, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Tobise et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,748,416). The Decision on Appeal also maintains the rejections of claims 1, 7-9, 11, 17-19, and 21-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Miyauchi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,852,533).

Claim 1, which is representative of the other rejected independent claim 11 with regard to similarly recited subject matter, reads as follows:

1. A reduced sensitivity spin valve sensor apparatus, comprising:
a spin valve sensor; and
at least one magnetic effect inducing device, wherein the at least one magnetic effect inducing device induces a magnetic field to the spin valve sensor to thereby reduce a sensitivity of a free layer of the spin valve sensor to applied magnetic fields and wherein the at least one magnetic effect inducing device is a pair of permanent magnet stiffening elements.

With regard to claim 1, Tobise does not teach the use of permanent magnets to reduce the sensitivity of a spin valve. Tobise addresses a problem that is different than

that of the present invention, and that the solution to this problem is the opposite to that of the present invention. To wit, Tobise seeks to increase sensitivity while suppressing Barkhausen noise. It therefore attempts to maintain as high a sensitivity as possible, and reduces noise by its selection of magnetic films. While Tobise may teach MR heads that have reduced sensitivity, the MR heads taught by Tobise are not at least one magnetic effect inducing device that is a pair of permanent magnet stiffening elements.

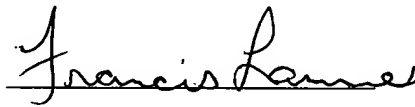
Additionally with regard to claim 1, Miyauchi does not teach at least one magnetic effect inducing device, wherein the at least one magnetic effect inducing device is a pair of permanent magnet stiffening elements. Miyauchi does not teach using magnets one the ends of an MR element to provide domain stabilization.

Therefore, the same distinctions between Tobise and the claimed invention and Miyauchi and the claimed invention in claim 1 apply for these claims. For the reasons described above, Tobise and Miyauchi do not contain all elements of independent claims 1 and 11. Hence, Tobise and Miyauchi fail to anticipate the present invention as recited in claims 1 and 11. Therefore, the additional features added by this Preliminary Amendment, the present independent claims 1 and 11 define over the Tobise and Miyauchi references. At least by virtue of their dependency on claims 1 and 11, the specific features of dependent claims 2, 4-10, 12, and 14-36 are not taught by Tobise or Miyauchi.

II. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over the prior art of record and is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Francis Lammes", written over a horizontal line.

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